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Capitalism and Terrorism

As the tenth anniversary of 9/11 passed away into history, acts of terrorism by both the individual and the state continued unabated. Since the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York, major terrorist attacks have occurred in New Delhi (the Indian Parliament building assaulted by Kashmir separatists); the Bali car bomb attack; the London underground and bus bombings; the Madrid train bombings and the more recent attacks in Mumbai (terrorist attacks at hotels, the central train station and a Jewish outreach Centre). The violence is relentless.

And of course State terrorism continues throughout the world.

In Sri Lanka, government forces finished off the Tamil Tigers in an orgy of violence and terror. Far from the lenses of television cameras and the print of news headlines that typify war reporting today, tens of thousands of civilians – perhaps as many as 40,000 – were killed in the last phase of fighting.

Elsewhere, the US committed acts of terror and torture and invented the word “*extraordinary rendition*” to hide the truth of what they were doing to obtain information from prisoners in their secret prisons around the world. The US’s Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) now runs a global abduction and internment operation of suspected terrorists, including one, until recently, in Gadhafi’s Libya. The CIA, since 2001, has captured an estimated 3,000 people and transported them around the world to undergo torture by proxy in the prisons of other countries.

The US not only indulges in torture by proxy but has been directly involved in this barbaric practice itself, notably through the use of “*water-boarding*” and sensory deprivation. The Iraq war also saw US acts of torture and terrorism. Beginning in 2004, physical, psychological and sexual abuse including torture, rape, sodomy and murder of prisoners held in the Abu Ghraib prison took place. These acts were committed by military police personnel of the US army together with others from the security services. And not to be outdone the British Army was indicted in September 2011 for abusing and torturing prisoners in Iraq. To borrow the phrase made by the rock musician, the late Frank Zappa, to describe modern capitalism: “*The torture never stops*”.

Other states have long records of terrorism and torture. In just the last 3 years, for example, more than 38,255 people have been missing due to the actions of State terrorism in Colombia a country in which 250,000 people are estimated to be missing (kidnapped and tortured) in the last 20 years. Torture and terrorism, either by individuals, groups or the state is a fact of life under capitalism and has not been diminished by the US’s “*war on terror*”, when much of that terror has been committed by the US and the various regimes its supports and maintains.

Then there is the terrorism of post-Soviet Russia. Russia, in its war in Chechnya, a war over control of the supply routes and transportation of oil, has also been a recipient of terrorism and a perpetrator of State terrorism in its own right. In October 2002 Chechen terrorists took 850 hostages at the Russian State theatre leading to 166 deaths. On September 1, 2004, 32 Chechnyan terrorists took 1,300 children and adults hostage at a school resulting in over 350 deaths. More recently there was a terrorist attack at Moscow airport. With regards the Russian State response to the

Chechen conflict, the journalist. John Pilger wrote:

On February 4, 2000, Russian aircraft attacked the Chechen village of Katyr Yurt. They used "vacuum bombs," which release petrol vapour and suck people's lungs out, and are banned under the Geneva Convention. The Russians bombed a convoy of survivors under a white flag. They murdered 363 men, women and children. It was one of countless, little-known acts of terrorism in Chechnya perpetrated by the Russian state, whose leader, Vladimir Putin, has the "complete solidarity" of Tony Blair (TIME TO RECOGNISE STATE TERROR 17 September 2004).

That was in 2000, a year before George Bush announced his “war on terror”. Up until 2009 the exact death toll from the Chechnyan conflict is unknown. Unofficial estimates range from 25,000 to 50,000 dead or missing, mostly civilians in Chechnya (WIKIPEDIA).

As we wrote in our pamphlet CAPITALISM CAUSES WAR AND TERRORISM, published some ten years ago:

Nationalism and its twin poison, religion, survive as ruling class ideas tailor-made for the consumption and confusion of workers. Ruling class ideas and beliefs swerve the purpose of keeping workers submissive and deluding them that their interests are the same as those of their exploiters. It is vital that these reactionary ideas be broken down and exposed for what they are before class consciousness can sweep away this brutal system with its wars and acts of terrorism (p. 28).

The working class has to decide what it wants; either a capitalist world of violence, war and terrorism run in the interest of the capitalist class or a Socialist world of peace in which production takes place just to meet human need.

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Terrorism is not Revolution

The recent massacre of 77 government officials in Oslo and a group of youngsters attending a political rally on the island of Utøya in Norway was depicted by the media as some inexplicable event. For the terrorist, Anders Breivik, the massacre was a political statement against “multi-culturalism” in Norwegian society and “cultural Marxism” in Europe generally. His objective was to ignite a white supremacist revolution and establish a white-only utopia.

The fantasy world of the white supremacist is most marked in the United States. One of the leading racist groups there is the White Aryan Nations. The organisation’s leading member, Louis Beam has recently written:

We do not advocate segregation. That was a temporary measure that is long past. ... Our Order intends to take part in the Physical and Spiritual Racial Purification of ALL those countries which have traditionally been considered White lands in Modern Times ... We intend to purge this entire land area of every non-White person, gene, idea and influence <http://www.rthoughtsrfree.org>

These self-styled "white separatists" believe that the United States government is controlled by either a conspiratorial cabal of non-whites or Jews, led by a “Marxist” President Obama. They seek to change this "Zionist Occupation Government" either through terror and violence or by influencing the political mainstream. They tell their followers that crime and “State welfare payment abuse” by African Americans, immigration by Mexicans and Asians and a fictional Jewish conspiracy emanating from Washington are responsible for a decline in the status of white workers. And they brand whites who do not support them as either race traitors or self-haters. No argument, it seems, can persuade them that the racist ideas they hold are simply mad, bad and dangerous to know.

Over the past three decades white supremacists have undertaken terrorist acts throughout the US while many are barricaded in Montana mountain shelters with stockpiles of weapons, awaiting the final Armageddon. Now a terrorist act by a white supremacist has taken root in Europe. It will not be the last terrorist act by disaffected and alienated workers who blame other workers for the failings of world capitalism and the instability the profit system causes to workers’ lives.

What if these racist groups achieved their racial utopia of a White America or Europe much in the same way as Islamists want to establish an Islamic Emirate under Sharia law? Nothing in fact would change. The class ownership of the means of production and distribution would still remain intact as would class exploitation and the class struggle. And what is so special about white workers being exploited in the production process rather than black workers or the capitalist class essentially being white rather than black? The answer is none what so ever. White supremacism, like Islamism, leads to the dead-end politics of violence and death. The only beneficiary of a divided working class is the capitalist class. Instead of class division there should be working class solidarity.

Terrorism: An Expression of Class Society

Most countries in the world have spawned a terrorist organisation – yet another expression of class society. The white supremacists grow out of the fear of migratory labour, the pressures of a being part of a truly world labour market, increased social alienation and the pressures exercised on the working class for jobs, housing and so on. Other terrorist groups arise out of the nationalist struggles which have been a violent consequence of capitalism's division into competing nation states.

Terrorism, then, is as old as capitalism itself, although most people come to associate terrorism as a post-Second World War phenomenon. Unquestionably people are shocked at bombing and murder, but they are shocked even more when they look at the number of former terrorists who are now respectively installed as heads of government, or ministers of state within the areas of their previous violent activities.

Who remembers the Stern Gang, the Jewish terrorists of the 1940's; the Mau-Mau of Jomo Kenyatta; the Algerian and Moroccan terrorists of the early 1970's who have now transformed themselves from secular terrorists fighting a nationalist struggle into Islamists proclaiming a "*jihad*" on the "*crusaders*" from Europe? The late Yassar Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, whose talents consisted in organising the hi-jacking and destruction of aircraft, the slaughter of air-line passengers and attacks on school-children with Russian weaponry, became the head of the embryonic state of Palestine to be embraced by President Bush at the White house as a dear friend and peaceful statesman.

The same transformation has taken place with other former proscribed terrorists. Nelson Mandela is now a revered statesman, a role model for children and is feted by politicians and celebrities alike but he was once considered a terrorist not only by the South African Apartheid regime but by the British government under Margaret Thatcher and by the United States who, apparently, still had his name on their "*terrorist watch list*" as late as 2008.

Of course the semantics of whether someone is a "*terrorist*" or a "*freedom fighter*" is highly subjective and prone to changes in the political wind of capitalism's stormy *realpolitik*. The command structure of the IRA, now respected politicians one and all, were once "*freedom fighters*" in the eyes of the capitalist Left while they were seen as "*terrorists*" to the British government.

However, their political label, whether as "*terrorists*" or "*freedom fighters*", was irrelevant to the hundreds of men, women and children who were killed and maimed by semtex explosives, incendiary devices and bullets paid for by supporters of Sien Fein in the United States. In the US it was easier for Gerry Adams to gain entry into the country in 1995 and visit the White House during the "*troubles*" than it was for the "*terrorist*", Nelson Mandela to visit the country, after he had been released from a South African prison. Mandela had to wait until 2008 to become "*one of us*". When Mandela dies world leaders will be queuing-up to praise him and to be seen standing at his graveside, his coffin draped with the South African flag. The poverty and class exploitation of the working class in South Africa will persist.

The former terrorist, who has become respectable, like the 17th century pirate Captain Morgan who went on to become governor of Jamaica and legally plundered the Caribbean, is more virtuous and dedicated to upholding the state authority on the one hand while on the other hand is firmly riveted to the state coffers. In Post-Apartheid South Africa the real question was not "*black freedom*" but who shall have the legal right of exploiting the working class within their borders, and who shall own and control the wealth of the community. And this was the role played by

Nelson Mandela as a black capitalist class joined the white capitalist class in exploiting the working class, whether white or, black.

The fact that most terrorist organizations have idealistic objectives like freeing the population from the tyranny of Imperialism, or restoring the rights of minorities, which incidentally is invariably coupled with territorial demands usually for mineral-bearing land or sea, does not alter the capitalist nature of their objectives, nor will it make any difference to the end result as far as the working class are concerned. A successful coup by a terrorist organization will only produce a change of ruling class; capitalism will continue. The entire history of terrorist organisations from the 19th century onwards is proof of this.

No modern capitalist state will allow its authority to be undermined by a minority using violence. Only in a backward country under colonial rule where the franchise is absent, and political representation stifled, can a nationalist terrorist organization have any chance of success. In any case, most nationalist movements are sponsored and supported by other countries; like the rebels in Libya who are being assisted by France, the US and Britain in return for oil concessions to be denied to competitors like Russia and China. In the world today the independence of little powers only exists on paper. The US government supports a myriad of regimes through transferring money directly to the government and armed forces in question. Client states are bought and paid for.

State Terrorism

There is always an antagonism between major powers due to their conflicting interests, consequently they will support and encourage any action, violent or otherwise which will weaken their opponents. The terrorist organizations of all countries receive aid in the form of arms, or financial aid, and ideological support in the form of propaganda. The present struggle in Afghanistan has the Taliban supported by Iran and sections of the ruling class in Pakistan. Before that, the US had supported terrorists against the Russian-backed Soviet government.

Murder, assassination, kidnapping are not the preserve of the terrorist organizations. State terrorism is just as pervasive whether it is the US, Russia, China, Israel, France, Britain and other capitalist States. Socialists do not take sides. We do not see the terrorist actions of capitalist states through a moral prism of good and evil. Terrorist actions come out of capitalist social system.

Capitalist states indulge in war and terrorism because of international rivalry over strategic points of interest, trade routes and scarce resources. In his on-line book, AMERICAN STATE TERRORISM: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE OBJECTIVES OF US FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST-WORLD WAR II PERIOD, N. Ahmed has studied in some detail the terrorist actions of the United States in Central America; its support of the Somozan Dictatorship, the intervention in Nicaragua, Chile and Vietnam and more recently in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He gives two excellent quotations among many. The first from the U.S. State Department's policy planning staff, written in 1948 at the start of the Cold War, headed at the time by George Kennan. This is what the report from the Policy Planning Staff noted:

We have about 50 per cent of the world's wealth, but only 6.3 per cent of its population... Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming... We need not deceive ourselves that we can afford the luxury of altruism and world-benefaction... We should cease to talk about vague and... unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we will have to deal in straight power concepts.

And the second quotation is taken from the British historian Mark Curtis, former Research Fellow at the Royal Institute for International Affairs. He wrote:

Mutual Anglo-American support in ordering the affairs of key nations and regions, often with violence, to their design has been a consistent feature of the era that followed the Second World War... Policy in, for example, Malaya, Kenya, British Guiana and Iran was geared towards organising Third World economies along guidelines in

which British, and Western, interests would be paramount, and those of the often malnourished populations would be ignored or further undermined.

And he continued

Similarly, US interventions overseas - in Vietnam, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Chile, and etcetera - were designed to counter threats to the Western practice of assigning the Third World to mere client status to Western business interests. British and US forces have acted as mercenary - and often extremely violent - mobs intended to restore 'order' in their domains and to preserve the existing privileges of elites within their own societies.

A similar analysis of Russian capitalism from 1945 and Chinese capitalism from 1948 would provide identical results, similar quotations and a similar track record of State Terrorism, violence, brutality and suffering.

Where is the Dissent?

Violence is not something which is natural to men and women otherwise there would be no need for the violent indoctrination of recruits or enforced enlistment into the armed forces. Killing someone is difficult and peaceful-co existence is what the overwhelming people try to achieve in their lives.

In fact there were 639 murders in Britain in 2009 which makes violent civilian death rare while tens of thousands are annually slaughtered world-wide in capitalism's wars either directly by the British military or through the export of weapons by British companies, worth some \$1022 million (WIKIPEDIA).

Most workers recoil at violence and violent behaviour which is why there is so much revulsion at the killing of dozens of young people in Norway but these self-same people remain either largely silent at the violence undertaken by capitalist governments or openly support the war on the grounds of "my country right or wrong. And those workers who do protest against war do so for moral and religious reasons and not from class interest. The capitalist cause of terrorism and war has to be understood and a good place to start this awareness is to reject political leadership and start thinking for yourself.

It did not take the Norwegian politicians long to muscle into the limelight and to be photographed in hypocritical solemnity in front of Oslo Cathedral. For it was quietly forgotten that Norway makes up a group of countries currently killing men, women and children in Afghanistan and Libya. State sanctioned violence is deemed acceptable but individual acts of terrorism are reviled. Such is the tortured logic of capitalism's politicians. Where in Norway is the condemnation of State violence by occupying forces in Afghanistan? There is a difference in degree but no difference in principle in a deluded individual shooting dead unarmed youngsters and a professional killer firing a drone missile into a village compound on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border killing women and children. An officially sanctioned mortar round will kill just as surely as a car bomb.

There is of course no reflection on this hypocrisy because the Labour Government in Norway, like its counterpart in Britain, has to involve itself in capitalism's wars. Looking at the photographs of the dead in Norway, some of whom were being groomed as future politicians, searching question need to be asked. How many of the dead supported Norway's war in Afghanistan and Libya? How many were committed to supporting a system of violence – capitalism? And where was the dissent? Where was the Socialist opposition to war? The low level of class consciousness and thinly spread Socialists across the world means that war, destruction and death will continue from one generation to the next.

Either Socialism or Capitalism with its Wars and Terrorism

War, violence and terrorism are not instruments which can be used in the establishment of Socialism. The modern state represents the ultimate development of the social power of coercion and destruction. The armed forces are under the control of the political machinery of government and are used for both external and internal repression;

against foreign capitalist states and against the indigenous working class. The control of the political machinery is based upon universal suffrage. This means that if the workers vote capitalist representatives to the seats of government, as they habitually do, they can, if they have a mind to, vote them out of office. It is not that the working class are enthusiastic supporters of capitalism – their experiences have taught them to expect little from any party. It is because at the moment they see no alternative to capitalism. This is a situation Socialists hope to remedy.

The establishment of socialism is not just based on the control of the political machinery: this is the end of the process. Socialism is not a change of government; it is a fundamental change in the nature and purpose of society. It is a democratic body of social opinion which provides the mandate for the continuance of Socialism.

Consequently terrorist organizations can never be revolutionary or Marxist for the following reasons:

- * They are dictatorial
- * They repudiate the class struggle
- * Their objectives are non-Socialist.

By the same token, terrorist organizations or forms of minority insurrection could never succeed in removing Socialism once established. Force cannot be successfully employed against a body of ideas. Unless the working class stop holding nationalist and religious ideas and resist involving themselves in the constant squabble between capitalists over the division of society's wealth then individual and state terrorism will continue.

Workers, as a matter of urgency, have to organise consciously and politically to get control of the politically machinery in order to establish Socialism. In the meantime, let the supporters of capitalism reflect on terrorism and the consequences of terrorism: their system caused it.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND WAR

Since our formation in 1904, we have been asked to support “*wars for democracy*”, and “*wars for liberation*” and even “*civil wars for Socialism*”. In every case the S.P.G.B. has refused to support this view that the workers' interest can be advanced in any way by means of capitalist war. We are consistently opposed war on the grounds of class interest arguing that instead of supporting the interest of the capitalist class and their government workers should organise consciously and politically to establish Socialism.

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The History Man

Historians, particularly those who support the Labour Party or left wing political groups do not like to refer to the Socialist Party of Great Britain in their work even though the SPGB has been in existence since 1904. Part of the reason is that over a whole area of working class politics, from reformism, the question of war and nationalism, religion, economics, and the meaning of Socialism itself, the Party has been right and our opponents demonstrably wrong.

One professional historian who deliberately has gone out of his way to hide from his students and reading public the historical existence of the Socialist Party of Great Britain, is Professor Eric Hobsbawm, once known as “*Kinnock's favourite Marxist (sic) Historian*”. In the 1980's, Neil Kinnock was the failed leader of the Labour Party before taking the European Union gravy train to Brussels and is now forming a political dynasty in Europe to rival the Kennedy's (see THE SUNDAY TIMES, June 14th 2009 and DAILY TELEGRAPH 18th September 2011).

Hobsbawm was for many years a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain and his book THE AGE OF EXTREMES: A SHORT HISTORY OF THE 20TH CENTURY 1914-1991 (1996) contains the usual apology for the actions of the Soviet Union, on the spurious grounds that the USSR acted as a “*force for good*” (p. 497) in

helping to defeat Hitler's Germany in the Second World War.

Hobsbawm conveniently ignores Lenin's influence on Hitler's formative political and strategic thinking, particularly the adoption of Lenin's doctrine of the violent seizure of power through minority action. The millions exterminated in Stalin's gulags seem to be for Hobsbawm to be of a minor historical detail. And he conveniently glosses over the Hitler-Stalin pact of August 1939, which was the prelude for six years of slaughter across the world; some 52 million people dead.

Marx's analysis of the development of capitalism is generally acknowledged by historians, but his belief in the revolutionary potential of the working class as a conscious and political force to establish Socialism is dismissed by his critics as "utopian". Many academic commentaries on Marx, like Professor John Gray in his BBC essay, *A Point of View: The Revolution of Capitalism* (September 4th 2011) wants to retain and build-on Marx's criticism of capitalism but avoid his revolutionary Socialist conclusion. The result of these academic studies, like Gray's essay itself, is always very disappointing. Marx's critique of political economy can only ever lead to a Socialist conclusion.

Hobsbawm, who claimed to be a Marxist, would have been forced to share Marx's revolutionary Socialist conclusion. However, in Hobsbawm's celebrated book *THE AGE OF CAPITAL 1848-1875* (1977) he devotes several pages to the development of the working class. He confines his narrow conception of the working class to just males and labourers and concludes with the following rhetorical question: "*But can we speak of 'the workers' as a single category or class at all?*" (p. 262). This goes against Marx's revolutionary statement set out in the *COMMUNIST MANIFESTO* where Marx had previously written:

Of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is a really revolutionary class.

Hobsbawm then asks what all the workers he had previously discussed had in common. And he answered this question by pointing out that there were united "*by a common sense of manual labour and exploitation, and increasingly by the common fate of wage-earning*" (p. 262). What Hobsbawm ignores is the fact that all these labourers along with those workers whom he misses; craftsmen, office workers, women, children, and servants, were all excluded from the ownership of the means of production and distribution and it was this exclusion which forced them to become, for Marx, a potentially historical and revolutionary class. The use of Marxian concepts does not inform Hobsbawm's history writing so in what sense was Eric Hobsbawm ever a Marxist? His use of the word "*exploitation*", for example, appears to refer to the payment of low wages to workers not the way in which Marx used exploitation in relation to the production of surplus value by the working class in the productive process; the source of the capitalist's profit.

In 1998, the year of the bi-centenary of the *COMMUNIST MANIFESTO*, Hobsbawm wrote an introduction to its republication by Verso publishing House. Hobsbawm joined-in with those like Francis Fukuyama who were celebrating the triumph of US dominance over the world after the end of the Cold War, by denigrating Marx's core political principle that capitalism creates revolutionary gravediggers in the form of the working class. This is what Hobsbawm wrote:

...if at the end of the millennium we must be struck by the acuteness of the Manifesto's vision of the then remote future of massively globalised capitalism, the failure of another of its forecasts is equally striking. It is now evident that the bourgeoisie has not produced 'above all...its own gravediggers' in the proletariat (E Hobsbawm, Introduction to THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO Verso, 1998, p 18)

Hobsbawm's criticism of the *MANIFESTO* is now specifically directed at the claim made by Marx that the workers have the potential to act in their own interest as a revolutionary class. However, Hobsbawm did not reflect for one minute on the reactionary forces which have severely retarded the spread of Socialist ideas within the working class for over one hundred years; the reformism of the Labour Party, the anti-Marxism of Lenin, the barbaric totalitarianism of the former Soviet Union, the dictatorships in Cuba, Vietnam and China; the gulags, the concentration camps and the genocide and war in the name of "*Socialism/Communism*"? In fact, Professor Hobsbawm, in his long political career supported a great number of these reactionary forces without once saying sorry for the incalculable harm they caused the Socialist movement. Marx gave no time-scale for the development of

the working class to become a revolutionary force but what he could never have foreseen is the number of intellectuals, like Professor Hobsbawm, who would help retard the development of Socialism.

And just to show whose side Hobsbawm really is on, ten years later, in a GUARDIAN article under the heading: SOCIALISM HAS FAILED; NOW CAPITALISM IS BANKRUPT, WHAT COMES NEXT? (Friday 10th April 2009) Hobsbawm states “*impotence faces those who believe in a planned socialism uncontaminated by private profit-seeking*”. Impotence, in fact, faces those who believe that you can establish a revolution where there is an essentially feudal economy and only an embryonic working class. Impotence faces those who believe workers can be led to Socialism rather than take on the responsibility for themselves to organise consciously and politically for the establishment of the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society. And impotence faces those who do not understand the basic fact of life under capitalism; that “*private-profit-seeking*” derives from the exploitation of the working class majority and generates the class struggle in the first place.

The purpose of Socialist production will be simply and solely to satisfy human needs. As any Marxist knows, the profit system and the market prevent production for use from taking place. Capitalism has developed the techniques of production and distribution including social and co-operative labour where the needs of all society could be met if the means of production were not privately owned. Unlike capitalism and the profit-system, Socialist society would be able to make full use of the techniques of production and distribution.

Hobsbawm, one of the architects of “*Thatcherism*” with its dogmatic mantra “*There is no alternative to the market*” has now fallen in love with the political monster he and his colleagues in MARXISM TODAY first created in the 1980’s in order to hide the bankruptcy of their own political ideas and beliefs. He now writes-off the Socialism of Marx and the Socialist Party of Great Britain as “*utopian*” and an act of “*political impotence*” incapable of being realised. And he is still referred to as a “*Marxist Historian*”. No wonder he was Kinnock’s favorite historian. Today, Professor Hobsbawm is to be found in the rarified atmosphere of the Athenaeum Club being served drinks by faithful servants, most likely the nearest Hobsbawm has ever got near to the working class.

Malcolm Bradbury’s 1974 novel the HISTORY MAN was a satire on left-wing politics within universities. In the 1979 BBC television adaptation, the historian and anti-hero, Howard Kirk, ends his political career in 1979 by voting Conservative. A similar path has been taken by Professor Hobsbawm; from the Communist Party of Great Britain to the Athenaeum Club. We are not surprised.

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Zombie Economics: Economic Ideas That Refuse To Die

As fans of horror films know only too well a zombie is a manifestation of the living dead usually popping up in a graveyard after either some voodoo incantation or cataclysmic nuclear disaster. The Australian economist, John Quiggin, author of ZOMBIE ECONOMICS: HOW DEAD IDEAS STILL WALK AMONG US (2010), transfers the idea of the fictional Zombie to economic theory. And the analogy works.

Professor Quiggin explains in considerable detail just how hard it is to kill off bad economic theories. And he gives some examples. There is the “*Great Moderation*” (a belief in a crisis free capitalism) so beloved by the likes of Alan Greenspan and the current Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, also known as “*Helicopter Ben*” for reviving Milton Friedman’s absurd idea of dropping money out of a helicopter onto the crowd below as a “*cure*” for “*deflation*”. Then there is “*the efficient markets hypothesis*” (strategies for gambling in the casinos of the financial markets). Next in line, there is the exotically named “*dynamic stochastic general equilibrium theory*” (rational economic man armed with perfect information). And finally there is the late President Ronald Reagan’s “*trickle-down economics*” (capitalism benefits the poor). All of these theories dominate economic teaching in the universities even in the face of overwhelming evidence that they don’t work in practice.

Professor Quiggin defines a Zombie idea as “*one that keeps on coming back, despite being killed*” (p.5). And he has in his sights one particular “*zombie*” idea; that capitalism left to its own devices can ensure indefinite “*full employment and steady economic growth*”. Quiggin reminds us that we have been here before. In October 1929, on the eve of the Wall Street crash, the leading economist of his day, Professor Irving Fisher, announced that “*Stock prices have reached what looks like a permanently high plateau*” (p.5). Irving Fisher believed in a crisis-free and harmonious capitalism with ever rising profits but he was wrong, a few days later the stock prices dived. Unemployment in the US rose from 1.5 million in 1929 to 12 million by 1932. There was never any permanent boom, yet the theories which justified Fisher’s view of the economic world persist to this day.

In the 1960’s, after economic liberalism was replaced with the ideas of Keynes, economic advisors to John F Kennedy believed the government had the power to prevent economic crises and trade depressions (p7) much in the same way as President Obama believes that his £200 billion economic stimulus will end the current levels of high unemployment in time for the Presidential elections. The optimism of the government controlling the trade cycle did not last a decade.

Amid the stagflation of the 1970’s, Keynes’ ideas of “*fiscal control of the economy*” were seemingly killed off by simultaneous high inflation and unemployment. THE TIMES told its readers that “*unemployment... will decline as fast and as soon as we all forget Keynes*” (13th February 1976). And then it was the turn of economic liberalism with their monetarist policies to roam the universities and economic policy institutes with its boast of “*sustained growth*” and “*No more boom and bust*”. Yet economic crises in the UK still occurred, but now under Tory governments, one in the early 1980’s and another in the early 1990’s. In both cases monetarist doctrines were unable to prevent unemployment from rising to a peak of over three million. Monetarism was just as ineffectual in preventing trade crises and depressions as Keynesianism.

Since 2009 the economic pendulum has swung back in favour of Keynes, championed by his latter day supporters like Professor Paul Krugman, James Tobin and, of course, John Quiggin himself. In the recent trade depression both Gordon Brown and President Obama embraced Keynes again. According to Martin Wolf: “*We are all Keynesians now*” (FINANCIAL TIMES 2008) while the economist Peter Pugh announced “*Keynes is Back*” (KEYNES 2009 p.172).

This has not stopped some economic liberals fighting back pretending that the global economic crisis was not really a crisis at all and was, instead, the fault of former President Clinton forcing the US banks to lend mortgages to the poor. This is disingenuous. For free market fanatics everyone is to blame, politicians, bankers and the poor but never the process of commodity production and exchange for profit itself. Capitalism can never be held to account for the consequences of the anarchy of commodity production although it was Marx who showed that economic crises were just a manifestation of capitalism’s destructive and contradictory economic laws. On the trade cycle he wrote:

...capitalist production moves through certain periodical cycles. It moves through a state of quiescence, growing animation, prosperity, overtrade, crisis and stagnation (WAGES, PRICE AND PROFIT in Selected Works Volume I, p. 440 1975).

This is an accurate description of capitalism and it is interesting to note that Marx gets no mention at all in Professor Quiggin’s index although it is hardly surprising since he associates “*Marxism*” with either the failed state capitalism of Russia (p.137) or with “*mechanistic determinism*” (p.175), whatever that means. Marx did not set out to guide economists and politicians in the management of capitalism. Quite the reverse. Capitalism, for Marx, was anarchic and acted as a fetter on production. CAPITAL was written as a critique of political economy and a dismissal of “*vulgar economics*” as a mere apology for the interests of the capitalist class. Economists like Smith and Ricardo tried to understand the workings of capitalism but could not get outside their “*bourgeois skin*” while those economists who came after them, including those cited in Quiggin’s book, had no interest in producing a scientific understanding of capitalism. Professor Quiggin is surprised economic liberalism persists despite its abject failure although he shouldn’t be. No economist can ever say to politicians and the capitalists who pay their salaries “*the game is up, Marx was right, capitalism can never be made to work in the interest of the working class*” any more than economists can truthfully say that social wealth derives from the exploitation of the working class in the production process. It would be the equivalent of a theologian admitting that atheists were correct and God was, in

fact, a social fiction. Modern economic theories mask an understanding of capitalism and do not explain “*its law of motion*” and its destructive and anti-social tendencies.

In science poor theories are generally replaced with better theories. A new theory is adopted in physics or chemistry which explains phenomena the previous theory was unable to explain. This is not the case with economics. Whereas in science defective theories are jettisoned, in economics bad theories persist from one generation to the next. Economic theories claiming capitalism can evade economic crises should have been dead and buried after the economic depression of the 1930’s and certainly after the depressions of the last three decades of the Twentieth Century. Dogma rules the production of economics not science.

It is ironic that the philosopher of Science, Karl Popper, attacked “*Marxists*” in his book CONJECTURES AND REFUTATIONS (1963) for holding on to theories which had been refuted by experience but did not extend his criticism to economic liberalism. If there is any candidate for the title “*pseudo-science*” surely it is economic liberalism. As Professor Quiggen observes “... *a theory that can’t be refuted by any conceivable evidence isn’t really a theory at all*” (p. 64). Quite so.

Professor Quiggin berates economic liberals like Milton Friedman, F. A. Hayek, Robert Lucas and other free market economists for dodging Popper’s falsification theory, where failed theories are defended by their authors through the adoption of “*immunising strategies*”; yet he does not apply Popper’s criteria to Keynes’s own failed doctrines to prevent periodic crises and trade depressions. He wants special pleading for Keynes (“*we need a newer Keynesianism*” p. 121) but the fact remains that Keynesianism falls into the same category of economic failure as the “*Zombie Economics*” of economic liberalism.

So, there is equally a stench of death coming from President Obama’s Keynesian “*fiscal stimulus*” policies just as there is a sickly sweet smell emanating from the economics justifying Cameron’s policy to privatise everything that moves, de-regulate and sweep as much government, Central and Local, into the private sector as possible. Both economic policies are candidates for the sobriquet “*Zombie economics*”. And this brings us on to a fundamental failure of the book; the support by Professor Quiggin for a “*mixed economy*” (pp. 200 -204) against the privatisation and austerity policies enacted today in most capitalist countries, either imposed by the World Bank and the IMF or from the misguided belief by politicians in the magic of the market. For the best part of 80 years there has been an intense debate between rival economists and politicians as to whether the State or private capitalism is the more rational than the other and whether a regulated capitalism is more efficient than free market capitalism. The debate is sterile and has nothing to do with the case for Socialism.

As far as the interests of the working class are concerned – and this includes trade unions who erroneously champion the public sector and increased government regulation– whether there is absolute privatisation or absolute state capitalism or a myriad of shades in between, workers still remain an exploited class producing more social wealth than they receive in wages and salaries.

And the sterile debate between privatisation and government intervention in the economy has nothing whatsoever to do with a capitalist or a Socialist alternative. State interference in the economy has nothing to do with Socialism. Neither nationalisation nor a regulated economy is Socialism or an approximation towards Socialism. Nationalisation or government legislation prohibiting the free movement of capital is not the same as the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society.

How do we kill a zombie? In some very sad internet chats rooms a great deal of time is spent discussing how to kill zombies; apparently a M29 SAW pump action shot gun is the weapon of choice. What, though, of the failed economic ideas which refuse to die? Professor Quiggin has no answer although Marx offered an explanation of why failed economic ideas persist even though they should have been killed off by experience. He pointed out:

In the domain of political economy, free scientific inquiry does not merely meet the same enemies as in all other domains. The peculiar nature of the material it deals with summons into the fray on the opposing side the most violent, sordid and malignant passions of the human breast, the Furies of private interest (CAPITAL. VOL. I Preface to the First Edition, Penguin 1996 p. 92).

Modern economics does reflect “*the most violent, sordid and malignant passion of the human breast*”. Economists, at least the leading theorists in universities and political think tanks, are paid to further the interests of Capital; to produce ideas defending commodity production and exchange for profit, justifying the private ownership of the means of production and exchange on the market and, in the case of Keynes, believing he was “*saving capitalism from itself*”.

As ideology, economic liberalism and Keynesianism are useful intellectual tools for defenders of capitalism to counter Marx and his revolutionary conclusion that the working class should replace capitalism with Socialism. And these economic fictions will persist until Socialist ideas become to dominate the thinking of the working class. That is how to kill “*Zombie Economics*”; by workers coming into contact with Socialist ideas, reading Marx’s account of capitalism and becoming Socialists. In short the necessity for conscious and political action by a Socialist majority in order to win the battle of ideas and abolish the wages system.

Finally, Professor Quiggen asks what sort of economics we want for the Twenty-First century. It is the wrong question. Economics is bound up with commodity production and exchange for profit. Socialism would be free from the subject-matter of economics; prices, wages, markets, capital, commodities and so on. So, do we need an economics for the 21st century? No, instead we need Socialism; production for use by free and voluntary labour within the framework of common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society.

WHAT SOCIALISM MEANS

Socialism is the only system within which the problems which now face workers can be solved; but what will it be like? Socialism is a system in which the means of production and distributing wealth will be owned by society as a whole. Under capitalism the land, factories, offices, mines, railways and other instruments of production and distribution are monopolised by a section of society only, who thus form a privileged class. Socialism will end this, for, with the means of life owned in common by the entire community, it will be a classless society in which the exploitation and oppression of man by man will have been abolished. All human beings will be social equals, freely able to co-operate in running social affairs. Drawing up a detailed blueprint for socialism is premature, since the exact forms will depend upon the technical conditions and preferences of those who set up and live in Socialism; but we can broadly define the essential features of Socialism. Socialism can only be democratic... The purpose of socialist production will be simply and solely to satisfy human needs... When the wealth has been produced, apart from that needed to renew and expand the means of production, all will freely take what they need to live and enjoy life. This is what we mean by “*free access*”. There will be no buying and selling, and hence no need for money.

QUESTIONS OF THE DAY Socialist Party of Great Britain March 1978, pp. 97-101 .

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Capitalism in Depression

August 2011 was a month in which economists and economic journalists thought capitalism was in meltdown. Panic was in the air with retail stores going into administration and the Co-op saying that they were experiencing the worst trading conditions for forty years. Shares were plummeting, the US lost its AAA rating for preferential interest rates on its debt, the US and British economy also slowed down with subsequent higher unemployment, the Euro was in trouble and the problem of debt repayment stalked most Western economies. Economic confidence was at an all-time low with 60,000 job losses announced in the banking sector alone. The capitalists and their economists were running scared.

In an economic depression when there is little or no prospect of making profit production is scaled back. There is now an estimated £60bn held by businesses in Britain. Yet, the capital is not being invested. According to the INDEPENDENT: “*the equivalent of 4.5% of British capitalism’s entire economic output*” is sitting idle because capitalists “*are unsure of making a profit*” (20th August 2011). Even the editorial admitted that governments cannot force capitalists to invest just as banks cannot be forced to lend to borrowers. Nevertheless the editorial urges the government to cut taxes for capital investment to “*kick-start*” the economy.

This policy is mistaken. In an uncertain market why should capitalists want to buy more plant and IT systems if there is no profitable outcome? Using their surplus cash to provide jobs for the unemployed is not what the capitalists are in business for. When the economic conditions improve and there is a prospect for making profit again companies will only be too willing to invest in production.

Governments believe the fiction told to them by economists that they can “*sail*” the economy through “*choppy economic waters*”. They can do no such thing. Take the case of unemployment. For three successive months up to July this year unemployment fell. George Osborne, the Chancellor of the Exchequer seized upon the statistics as evidence that his policies were working and basked in the praise of his Party and his craven supporters in the media like Simon Heffer.

Then in August the unemployment figures went up by 38,000 and the rise in the unemployment rate was blamed by Osborne on events outside the control of the government –Europe, the US, anywhere and everywhere but the consequences of his own his economic policy. However, politicians cannot have it both ways.

The truth is that if Mr Osborne went on holiday to a Tuscany Villa for five years the cyclical movement of the economy would be no different if he had remained at No 11 Downing Street for the same period of time. Economists and politicians cannot control the economy; they never have and they never will. In September 2011 unemployment went up again by another 80,000 to 2.51 million.

The Failure of Government Economic Policy

Ben Bernanke, Chairman of the Federal Reserve and former Princeton Professor of economics claims to understand current economic events by his own research into the depression of the 1930’s. However, he does not understand the cause of the economic depression of eighty years ago any more than he understands the cause of the economic depression today. Marx’s analysis of capitalism and the contradictions of commodity production and exchange are unknown to him.

Like many economists of his generation Bernanke was influenced by the writings of the economist Milton Friedman. As a result, Bernanke’s theory of economic crises derives from a superficial monetarist analysis of the economy. Monetary problems generated by the banks or governments are seen by monetarists as the villains of the piece while the introduction by economic policy makers of the right monetary policy, including quantitative easing, is the solution. It isn’t.

That all these monetarist policies were tried by the Japanese government during its “*lost decade*” in the 1990’s, including Keynesian policies of fiscal stimulation, only goes to show that academic economics can tell us little or nothing of the trade cycle let alone providing governments with usable and effective economic policies. Instead of Japanese government economic policy creating the conditions for an improvement in the Japanese economy it was the belief by some capitalists that they would make a profit and were prepared to invest their capital in commodity production again which improved economic conditions.

And not all areas of the economy are affected by a depression. The current unemployment rate in Japan stands at 5.1% and although high it still means that a majority of workers there are in paid employment producing surplus value. So it is no surprise to learn that the Japanese heavy machinery makers Komatsu and Hitachi Construction Machinery recently reported big net profit increases. Not that government economic policy should take any credit when a serious up-turn in the Japanese economy eventually takes place. The failed economic policies of the government have left it with one of the worst debts in the world, the interest of which will have to be paid for by the Japanese capitalist class as a whole.

The inability of economists and politicians to say anything of substance about current economic events led the DAILY MAIL to run a headline “*So many experts, so few answers*” (24th August 2011). The newspaper reported, with incredulity, that at an economic summit on Lindau, an island in Germany’s Lake Constance, 17 of the 38 living Nobel Laureates in economics, including Joseph Stiglitz and Sir James Mirrlees, met with 300 young economists to

debate what they believed were the two real salient issues of economics in the world today: European football and prostitution. A discussion by the assembled economists on the cause of economic crises and subsequent trade depressions and the fact that 24 million workers in Europe are currently unemployed when there is urgent unmet social need was not even on the agenda. Such is the degeneration of economics since Marx's day. As one wit remarked, there are two types of economist; those who cannot forecast economic crises and those who do not know they cannot forecast economic crises. Marx did not forecast economic crises but he did explain them.

Marx and Economic Crises

It was Marx who showed how and why economic crises occur. He demonstrated that crises periodically take place because of the fundamental contradictions found in commodity production and exchange for profit. Unlike the monetarists, Marx gave a deeper and more profound understanding of the relationship between economic categories like commodities, including labour-power and money with the movement of the trade cycle and economic crises. He wrote:

Money is not only "the medium by which the exchange is effected" but at the same time the medium by which the exchange of product with product is divided into two acts, which are independent of each other, and separate in time and space (THEORY OF SURPLUS VALUE, Part II, p 502 Moscow 1975)

And:

Crisis arises from the impossibility to sell. The difficulty of transforming the commodity – the particular product of individual labour – into its opposite, money, i.e. abstract general social labour, lies in the fact that money is not the particular product of individual labour, and the person who has affected the sale, who therefore has commodities in the form of money, is not compelled to buy again at once, to transform the money again into a particular product of individual labour (ibid., 504).

The anarchy of capitalist production is forced, through competition, to adhere to the discipline imposed by the law of value behind the backs of capitalists much like gravity in nature. Commodities on the market have to reflect their true selling price set by the socially necessary labour that went into their production. Money and its complex movement through circulation as a store of value cannot escape this economic discipline although the IMF, monetarists and central bankers mistakenly believe they have the power to carry on with “*restructuring*” debt and imposing “*austerity programmes*” to avoid global economic crises and depressions as though economic reality –the need of capitalists to realise value congealed in commodities - revealed by Marx's labour theory of value, does not exist. However, social wealth takes place in commodity production and is only realised in circulation. Fictional capital, over and above real tangible social wealth, is just that, fictional (see Engels on the consequences of the anarchy of capitalist production in, ANTI-DUHRING, pp. 324 – 344, 1978). The laws of capitalism determine the movement of the trade cycle not the IMF and bankers.

Marx went on to show that economic crises were inevitable while capitalism lasts, bringing in its wake, for the working class, a period of higher unemployment, greater fear and anxiety for their current job prospects and unpredictability and uncertainty for future employment.

There is no such thing as a permanent economic crises and depressions

Finally there is the question of capitalism in relation to economic crises. Marx never said capitalism would collapse under the weight of its contradictions. Nowhere did Marx write that capitalism would collapse. This is what he said:

“...capitalist production moves through certain periodical cycles. It moves through a state of quiescence, growing animation, prosperity, overtrade, crisis and stagnation” (WAGES, PRICE AND PROFIT in Selected Works Vol. 1, p. 440 London 1975).

In every depression some economists and politicians declare that there is no prospect of recovery: the depression will

be permanent, (Engels for a time, held that view during the Great Depression of 1875-1895). One argument supporting that view is the supposed enormous increase of productivity. Others argue that the excess productive capacity in certain industries shown by the crisis will continue to prevent new investment and increased output because it prevents a profit being made. But, as Marx pointed out, every depression results in the destruction of much of the production plant of bankrupt companies as well as some previously unsold commodities which have become unsalable. The output of industry is sharply reduced when the crisis occurs and existing stocks of commodities, where viable are gradually sold off, often at discounted prices. The unemployed are no longer producing but continue to be consumers though at a lower level. In due course profitable investment prospects open up again, some of them in new industries producing new products.

Falling stock markets, bankruptcies and indebted countries forced to endure austerity programmes do not signal either the end of capitalism or a permanent crisis and depression. After studying the trade cycle in some detail, Marx summed it up with the words "*There are no permanent crises*" (THEORIES OF SURPLUS VALUE Vol. II Part 2 p 269). What should be remembered about capitalism is that it is a social system based on commodity production and the exploitation of labour power not in producing for social need by free voluntary labour. The real question about the un-invested 4.5% of Britain's entire economic output is why it can sit idly by when there is real social need in the world. However, to begin to answer this question moves the focus away from the myth that economists and politicians can deliver a crisis-free capitalism to a Socialist critique of capitalism which has the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society as the only answer.

DYING FOR ALLAH AND JESUS

A suicide bomber, speaking from heaven through an unidentified fundamentalist Muslim cleric, complained bitterly about the lack of virgins he found in paradise after blowing himself up. "*I was promised seventy virgins and everlasting happiness when I arrived in heaven*", he said, "*and when I got here there were none for the holy martyrs*". When the dead bomber complained to Allah, Allah apologised, saying that it was very hard to find virgins nowadays. The suicide bomber said he was very sceptical about the whole suicide bomber thing to begin with. He thought it was a stupid idea at first but the assurance of seventy virgins clinched the deal. He was considering a lawsuit but unfortunately found out to his cost that there are no lawyers in heaven either.

If the joke is in rather poor taste, then the reality is even uglier. General Sir, now Baron, Richard Dannatt recently argued that officers fighting in Afghanistan need to be spiritually better prepared for war. He wanted to include a spiritual dimension in their training: *Qualities and core values are fine as a universally acceptable moral baseline for leadership, but the unique life, death, Resurrection and promises of Christ provide the spiritual opportunities that I believe take the privilege of leadership to another level.* (TIMES 18th October 2007). Not that it will do the dead soldiers much good as they are scraped into body bags. Fighting for the interests of the ruling class, their private property ownership, their resources, their trade routes and their spheres of influence, is no laughing matter. And it is in poor taste to tell soldiers that "*dying for Jesus*" is any more sane and rational than it is for Islamic fanatics "*dying for Allah*" for the empty promise of seventy virgins in an afterlife of eternal spiritual bliss and contentment.

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Was Marx a Millenarian?

The Irrationality of Conspiracy Theories

Was Marx a Millenarian? This accusation was recently thrown at Marx by Andrew Gamble, once a leading figure on the Left until he embraced the politics of New Labour. He is now a professor of politics at Cambridge University.

Gamble's criticism arose from reviewing Eric Hobsbawm's latest book HOW TO CHANGE THE WORLD: TALES OF MARX AND MARXISM. Eric Hobsbawm is an unrepentant Stalinist and has little or nothing to tell about how to change the world. His politics led to the support for war, gulags and a quick exit from the living. As a left-wing historian he wrote the Socialist Party of Great Britain out of working class history.

Professor Gamble stated:

“Marx’s own millenarian hopes about the creation of a classless society beyond conflict may have proved illusionary” (INDEPENDENT 21.01.11).

Is this true? What is Millenarianism? And is a classless society “illusionary”? According to Wikipedia, Millenarianism is:

“... a core doctrine in Christian eschatology, with the expectation of the Second Coming and the establishment of a Kingdom of God on Earth. According to prophecies in the Revelation of John, this kingdom of God on Earth will last a thousand years or more (a millennium)”.

Millenarian groups claim that society and its rulers are corrupt, unjust, or otherwise wrong. They therefore believe they will be destroyed soon by a powerful and destructive force. Today, as the internet and the popular press demonstrates only too well, conspiracy theorists see powerful and oppressive groups everywhere; Masons, the reptilian aliens of David Icke’s fevered imagination, Zionists, illuminati, the Communist conspiracy to sap and impurify natural bodily fluids, Jewish financiers and so on. And, of course, you have the reactionary conspiracy theorists at the DAILY MAIL; Mel Philips, Peter Hitchens, Richard Littlejohn et al who believe there is a Marxist conspiracy emanating from the BBC, the GUARDIAN and the universities all hell-bent *“to change the British way of life”* (for an example of this irrationality see the incoherent and childish rant by James Delingpole: *“How the BBC fell for a Marxist plot to Destroy Civilisation from within”*, MAIL ON SUNDAY, Sept. 25th 2011).

The recent act of terrorism in Norway, which left 78 people dead, was undertaken by a lone fascist who believed the Norwegian government was also part of a European-wide *“Marxist conspiracy”*. His 1500 page manifesto is a conspiratorial fantasy of epic proportions. The document, 2083: A EUROPEAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE is a template for future right-wing terrorism in Europe, a rambling manifesto that at times rails at *“cultural Marxists”* whoever they are meant to be. He even acknowledged the reactionary writings of Melanie Phillips of the DAILY MAIL as a source of inspiration for his crazed world view of hidden conspiracies quoting her rabid journalism at length. He also cited the opinions, found with monotonous regularity in the SUNDAY TIMES, of another arch-conservative, Jeremy Clarkson, a leading intellectual in David Cameron’s infamous, albeit diminishing, Chipping Norton set.

Such Global conspiracy theorists believe that only a cataclysmic catastrophe will engender change in which a purified new order will be established and true believers rewarded. Of course there is nothing that can be said to a convinced global conspiracy theorist to dissuade them of their irrational view of the world since any criticism ends up forming part of the conspiracy. Global conspiracy theory logically leads to solipsism – the belief that the person holding the conspiracy theory is right and everyone else is wrong and part of the conspiracy.

The journalist, David Aaronovitch has recently charted the history of conspiracy theories in his book VOODOO HISTORIES: HOW CONSPIRACY THEORIES SHAPED MODERN HISTORY (2010). He criticises people who believe in powerful cabals since it obstructs a rational view of the world. Yet Aaronovitch book has a silent sub-plot. His real target in writing the book is not mentioned. For his book is a sneering attack on those who rejected as lies the claims made by Blair and Bush that there were *“weapons of mass destruction”* in Iraq in order to justify war.

Blair in fact, went on to ridicule the *“conspiracy theorists”* who said that the war in Iraq was about oil and not for bestowing Western values of *“peace and democracy”* on the region by forcibly removing an authoritarian dictatorship with links to al Qaeda. The release of subsequent government minutes showed Ministers and civil servants meeting with energy representatives prior to the Iraq war in 2003 (see <http://www.energybulletin.net/stories/2011-04-23/surprise-surprise-iraq-war-was-about-oil> and *“Blair’s War for Oil”* SOCIALIST STUDIES 80).

In 2003 Aaronovitch wrote the following pledge, convinced that the *“conspiracy theorists”* sceptical of the Bush/Blair justification for war in Iraq were demonstrably wrong:

If nothing is eventually found, I – as a supporter of the war – will never believe another thing that I am told by our government or that of the US ever again...and, more to the point, neither will anyone else. Those weapons had better be there somewhere. They probably are. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,3604,945381,00.html>

Does David Aaronovitch still stand by his pledge? Has he refused to believe the governments of Britain and the UK about the reasons for war in capitalism? No, he is currently a leading cheerleader for the War in Libya on the grounds that it is conflict between “*good and evil*” rather than for oil interests. Even before the fighting stopped the oil contracts were being signed between the victorious rebels and British oil companies, one with contacts to a Coalition Tory Minister.

Was Marx a Millennarian?

As for Professor Gamble, is his accusation against Marx correct? Was Marx a Millenarian in the sense of subscribing to a world conspiracy and impending apocalypse? The answer is no; and for a number of very good reasons.

In the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, Marx and Engels praised the way in which capitalism had developed the power of human productivity:

The bourgeoisie, during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together. Subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs, clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalization of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground--what earlier century had even a presentiment that such productive forces slumbered in the lap of social labour? (THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO AND THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS, Socialist Party of Great Britain, p. 64-65, 1948).

Marx and Engels acknowledged the role of capitalism and the capitalist class in human history. They did not see capitalism as intrinsically evil. In Capital Marx showed that the capitalist had no choice but to behave the way he did under pain of competition in order to remain a capitalist.

The Socialist case Marx and Engels put against capitalism was not a moral one. Instead, they said that capitalism acted as a fetter on the productive forces. It was the impediment imposed by the capitalist relations of production which generated the class struggle, socialist ideas, socialists and the necessity for Socialism. That capitalism is a fetter on production was not an invention of Marx and Engels. They pointed to capitalism's periodic economic crises with its over-production, destruction of commodities and high levels of unemployment as evidence of capitalism's historical bankruptcy to meet the needs of all society.

The usefulness of capitalism lay in the development of the productive forces, including social labour. The necessity of Socialism was that within the social framework of common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society the productive forces would be able to freely develop to meet the needs of all society; that is, to create the conditions of abundance.

This opportunity was acknowledged by Engels some three decades later in 1872 when writing in *Die Volksstaat*:

(The) industrial revolution...has raised the productive power of human labour to such a high level that - for the first time in the history of humanity - the possibility exists, given a rational division of labour among all, to produce not only enough for the plentiful consumption of all members of society and for an abundant reserve fund, but also to leave each individual sufficient leisure so that what is really worth preserving in historically inherited culture - science, art, human relations is not only preserved, but converted from a monopoly of the ruling class into the common property of the whole of society, and further developed... (THE HOUSING QUESTION) www.marxists.org/archive/marx/.

Nor did Marx and Engels see exploitation as a secret conspiracy although the generation of surplus value was hidden by the market relationships of exchange. Exploitation under capitalism was not as direct as it was under Feudalism

but was a consequence of workers forced, by not owning the means of production and distribution, to sell their ability to work as a commodity to a capitalist class in exchange for a wage and salary. Class exploitation was not a conspiracy but existed because the means of production and distribution were privately owned and protected by the capitalist State.

Marx and Engels gave no date for the establishment of Socialism. So far Socialism has not been established by a socialist majority anywhere in the world; neither in Russia, nor in China and nor in the White House under Barak Obama despite what the pathetic Sarah “*mamma grizzly*” Palin and her mad hatter Tea Party red necks would have us believe. Socialism is dependent upon the formation of a socialist majority understanding and desiring Socialism. Until a socialist majority exists capitalism will merely pass from one economic crisis to another with all its attendant social problems like war, unemployment, poverty and social alienation. Unlike Millenarians, Marx and Engels stressed that society changed by human agency –class struggle “*the motor force of history*” - not by cataclysmic events. Socialist revolution, for example, will take place consciously and politically by a working class “*acting for itself*”. And the emancipation of the working class from capital will involve “*the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex*” (Clause 4 DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, Socialist Party of Great Britain).

From Radical Students to Reactionary Professors

Socialism will be for the benefit of everyone not a select minority. The Socialist objective is for production to take place just to meet human need. Yes it will be a classless society but isn't that more desirable than one riven through with class conflict?

And Marx and Engels rejected both fatalism and determinism. “*History does nothing*”, wrote Marx, “*it ‘possesses no immense wealth’; it ‘wages no battles’. It is man, real, living man who does all that, who possesses and fights; ‘history’ is not, as it were, a person apart, using man as a means to achieve its own aims; history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims*” (THE HOLY FAMILY Ch. 6 <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/subject/quotes/index.htm>).

In the COMMUNIST MANIFESTO, Marx sketched out the development of the working class from an incoherent mass to a point where they are able to establish a revolutionary political party. That historical process has demonstrably happened with the establishment of the Socialist Party of Great Britain in 1904 by men and women from the working class.

Class consciousness and political action has been undertaken by workers in a Socialist party with revolution and the establishment of Socialism as its sole objective. Surely that is an insight offered by Marx which should be a cause of congratulatory praise not childish insult. And it is a truly positive political insight. That the working class has the potential to free itself from capitalism is one of the most important Socialist ideas over the last two hundred years.

The negative comment by Professor Gamble towards Marx is symptomatic of a belief now held by ex-communists, Trotskyists, and left wingers generally, (many of whom joined the New Labour project with its core belief that the class struggle had been invented by the Soviet Union), that the working class is not cut out for Socialism, little more than a mere unthinking “*mass*” to be led by leaders.

There is, for a generation of political activists who once passed through the universities in the 1960's and 1970's as “*radical students*”, the false comfort of political conservatism in old age: the reactionary mantra of: “*no alternative to the market, no alternative to capitalism and no agency capable of revolutionary change*”. Socialists have never needed intellectuals to produce Manifestos or theoretical tracts. We can think and act for ourselves. We do not need professors doing the thinking for us and nor does the world's working class.

As he sits in his comfortable chair at Cambridge University what would Professor Gamble make of the young man who wrote in 1976 two highly critical books against capitalism; CAPITALISM IN CRISIS and FROM ALIENATION TO SURPLUS VALUE? Marx, on the other hand, never lost his belief that the working class by its own conscious and political effort could make history.

To conceive of a classless society is not illusory. What is illusory is the highly conservative and reactionary belief that society does not change and cannot be changed in a revolutionary way.

WHAT WE SAID AND WHEN

During the period November 1986 to March 1987, Camden and North West London Branches organised a series of 10 lectures dealing with fundamental aspects of the Socialist Party's case. These lectures covered subjects that were of importance when the Party was formed in 1904 – subjects still important in 2011.

With each Lecture we published a FACT SHEET, containing quotations from various Socialist Party of Great Britain publications and quotations on the same subject from our various opponents and other sources. These Fact Sheets form a useful contribution to the stand taken by the S.P.G.B, which over the years has been seen to be the correct one. We have collated these sheets and together with the leaflet giving the complete lecture list offer them to you as part of the essential propaganda material for the Socialist. CAMDEN AND NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCHES, December 2011.

Over the next 10 editions of SOCIALIST STUDIES we are going to reprint these quotations setting out the S.P.G.B.s case for Socialism along with the failed attempt by our political opponents to either to misrepresent or distort what we have said. The collated sheets are available at a price of £1 and cheques should be made payable to SOCIALIST STUDIES.

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The Govan Debate (part 3)

Question: “Comrade Shaw says that there is no Socialism in Russia. Will he explain why every Capitalist country is opposed to Russia?”

Answer by Comrade SHAW:

“Foreign capitalists are opposed to Russia for the same reason that Britain and Germany are opposed to each other. Russia is a trade rival competing in the World's markets with other capitalist countries in order to sell her commodities. While opposed to each other for this reason, all are agreed that Private Property must be protected. Trading goes on between Russia and other Capital countries, loans are floated, and millions have invested in Russia by foreign capitalists. At the present moment advertisements appear in the press offering you a high rate of interest if you will lend your money to Russia. The interest accruing from such loans comes out of the exploitation of Russian workers. All countries where the capitalist mode of production, distribution and exchange exists are opposed to each other”.

Question: “Must we merely put a cross on our ballot papers in order to get Socialism, and the kind capitalists will then hand over?”

Answer by Comrade SHAW:

“No. when the workers understand Socialism and take the action necessary to obtain it, the capitalists will not be asked to “hand over”. The workers will take over and the bosses' opinions on the matter won't matter a Tinker's curse”.

Question: “Will Socialist Society be political or economic?”

Answer by Mr KILPATRICK, B.S.I.S.L.P.:

“Society under Socialism will be a social unit, instead of at present divided into economic and political classes”.

Supplementary question by the same questioner:

“Since man is a political animal, I would like to know if Kilpatrick’s organisation claims that politics will be abolished under Socialism”.

Answer by MR KILPATRICK:

“What I understand by “*Political*” is that state of affairs wherein we have different economic classes who struggle with each other. Under Socialism classes will be abolished and the political struggles of classes will cease. Society will have to have some method of conducting the affairs of the community and social Administration will be entirely different from the present political system. I would say that man is a social animal rather than a political animal”.

Question:

“Did not the workers in Italy take possession of a number of factories and were driven out by their masters who used their control of the State forces through having political power”.

Answer by C. MARTIN B.S.I.S.L.P:

“The people of Italy who took control of the factories were not Socialists but Syndicalists who did not believe in taking political action. The S.L.P. and the B.S.I.S.L.P. believe in talking political action as well as economic action”.

The Chairman at this stage announced that questions would have to cease but further discussion could take place. Each participant would be allowed five minutes.

A. THOMPSON, S.P.G.B.:

“Much had been said of political action tonight by the opponents of the S.P.G.B. but it was quite apparent that they did not understand what it meant. Marx and Engels made it quite clear (as did all literature published by the S.P.G.B.) that political action meant that action which had for its object the control of the governmental powers which controlled the armed forces of the State. Engels pointed out that the workers would have to be in a majority, and thoroughly understanding the necessity for such action before they could establish Socialism.

Much misunderstanding exists as to the Socialist Party’s attitude regarding Trade Unions. The Socialist Party of Great Britain had always made it quite clear that the workers must organise on the political and economic field on sound class lines. Such organisation could not be accomplished by unclass-conscious workers, hence the S.P.G.B. carried on Socialist propaganda everywhere it was possible to do so. Everyone present should study the works of Marx, and when they had done so, they would see that the only organisation they could join, if they wanted Socialism, was the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

Mr M’KAY, S.L.P.:

“Shaw’s position regarding Russia was the same as that told by the average bourgeois tourist who had spent a few days there then returned and spoke of things he did not understand. The facts are that the workers in Russia produce consciously in their own interests. Doctors, Lawyers, etc. are paid less than many of the manual workers. (Comrade Shaw: “*What is your authority for making that statement*”?). A friend of mine, returned from Russia recently, had been forced whilst employed in that country as a Dentist to appeal to his clients who were members of Unions to use their cards in order to obtain wine and cigarettes for him.

The delegates of the Timber Trade while in Russia had taken films of the Russian workers engaged in their employments and the films showed the workers to be strong, well fed, vigorous and healthy specimens of humanity. Work was done under ideal conditions, was not mechanical, and there was no compulsion. The workers, generally, were very satisfied and realised that in the near future all this work would rebound to their benefit. Every stage of the Five Year Plan was of interest to the International Proletariat.

A Socialist Revolution had undoubtedly taken place in Russia, but, as yet, Socialism proper had not been established. It was only a matter of time until it would become a living reality. Meanwhile, the S.P.G.B. theories against Russia but this only shows that they are feeling very sore about the matter, particularly the failure of their pet hates. Eventually the S.P.G.B. will spark out”.

Mr CHARLES MARTIN, B.S.I.S.L.P.:

“Thompson of the S.P.G.B. says that Trade unions are necessary under Capitalism and that is the S.P.G.B. position. The SOCIALIST STANDARD, for March 1915, says that the working class must organise both economically and politically. Shaw says Trade unions are rotten. Shaw seems to be very inconsistent. However it is the main points of the S.P.G.B. position I wish to get after.

Marx digs the S.P.G.B. pretty hard in the “COMMUNIST MANIFESTO” when he says that: “*The workers cannot lay hold of the ready-made State machinery and wield it for their own purposes*” etc.

The B.S.I.S.L.P. says that the workers must organise on class lines on both the economic and political fields. We oppose the Communist Party for advocating reforms and for their bad tactics generally.

The Russian workers got control of the main industries thus getting economic power. With this economic power they soon got political power. All classes in history had likewise to have economic power before they could attain political power. The S.P.G.B. says that the workers must organise economically and politically but take no practical steps to organise the workers on the economic field. They are purely and simply a political party, and as such, is no use to the working class”.

Comrade **TRAVERS, S.P.G.B.:**

“Industrial Unionism as a method of revolution has still been forgotten by its champions in their endeavour to deal with the scientific position of the Socialist Party of Great Britain. This is very significant. Instead of members of the S.P.G.B. studying Industrial Unionism, as desired by Mr Martin the boot is on the other foot for it is quite obvious that the case for Industrial Unionism has been outlined by its opponents tonight than its advocates. If the opponents of the S.P.G.B. will only study the position of that organisation they will soon see that Industrial Unionism is a red herring which must be kicked out of the workers’ path (A voice: “*Industrial Unionism is a bird with two wings*”). A bird with two wings is of no use if it has no brains. The antidote to the fallacies of Industrial Unionism and the many other red herrings is a sound knowledge of Socialist Principles. Once the workers have that knowledge, and not until they have it, then the business of emancipation will be a relatively simple matter”.

Answer to discussion by Comrade **SHAW, SPGB:**

The wordy assertions of our opponents fail to touch even the fringe of the Socialist Party’s position. Misrepresentation has been resorted to, but this misrepresentation by Mr M’Kay will serve to show up in its true light the attitude of the Socialist Labour Party towards the War. Mr M’Kay says that the Socialist Party of Great Britain deserted the workers when the war broke out in 1914, but let us see. (Mr M’Kay at this stage, on a point of order said that the Socialist party of Great Britain were never with the workers at any time). I would remind you that his colleague, Mr Martin has in his possession the official organ of the Socialist party for 1915, which in itself gives lie to the statement that the S.P.G.B. “*packed up*” during the war. On that much vexed question of “*guts*” which annoyed Mr. Martin, let us see what kind of a show was put up by those who possessed, or claim to possess, so much of that commodity. First of all, what did the Socialist party of Great Britain do in 1914? Listen to this. (Quoting from the MANIFESTO of the S.P.G.B.):

“*Having no quarrel with the working class of any country, we extend to our fellow workers of all lands the expression of our goodwill and Socialist fraternity and pledge ourselves to work for the overthrow of capitalism and the triumph of Socialism*”.

That was the attitude of the S.P.G.B. towards the war, but let us see how the men with the “*guts*” the “*Fighting*

S.L.P” as they called themselves, faced up to the issue. This is from the S.L.P. paper, “THE SOCIALIST”, December 1914:

“The S.L.P. –let us admit it freely, it has been taken by storm, though not so disastrously as other parties. What policy does the S.L.P. follow with respect to this war? We do not know. We are disunited. We are groping for a lead at the present time”.

The Editor of the same journal wrote in the issue of November 1914, three months after the war broke out:-

“I cannot say what the official attitude of the Party is” (Loud laughter).

You have heard the quotations from the organs of both organisations relative to the war, and it will be obvious to you which is the correct attitude.

We have been informed by our opponents that the condition of the workers in Russia are better than in any other country, they have a Socialist government there, but have not got Socialism. No evidence has been presented to us that there is a Socialist government in Russia, we are merely asked to believe the statement. I explained in answer to a question what was going on in Russia, that Capitalism is being built up and not Socialism. Regarding the position of the Industrial Unionist which S.L.Per and B.S.I.S.L.P.er alike take a stand on, I have enough material here to speak for two hours on the subject but I intend to deal with the main points only due to the lateness of the hour.

The Govan Debate – Opposition to all Political Parties - of 1931 will be concluded in the next edition of SOCIALIST STUDIES. In the meantime readers can read the entire debate on-line at www.socialiststudies.org.uk and can buy a copy of the original transcript for £2 made payable to Socialist Studies to cover printing, packaging and postage. There is a danger that original documents like paintings or architectural drawings can become a commodity fetish or seen as more important than the content of the text itself. What historical documents we have will be deposited electronically on our site with free access for those interested in reading them rather than being stored in universities solely for access by academics or being found sold in second hand bookshops. These documents are the work of Socialists working within the framework of the OBJECT AND DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES in the struggle to establish common ownership and democratic control of the means of production by all of society, which is the sole objective of the reconstituted Socialist Party of Great Britain.

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Ten Years After 9/11 - The Deadly Aftermath

Seldom in the history of capitalism can there have been such a cynical display by politicians of their crocodile tears, their supposed grief for victims, their indignation at crimes, and their suspiciously eager calls for revenge. But ten years after the planes smashed into Manhattan’s Twin Towers, we are still told only of the 3000 or so who were killed on that particular fine day in early September. At the tenth anniversary, in saturation media coverage, not a word is said about the responsibility of politicians and bureaucrats for the subsequent and still on-going environmental and health disaster, the subsequent illnesses and deaths.

The capitalist left have repeatedly marched and protested against Washington’s wars: the so-called “war on terror”, the Middle East wars, in Afghanistan and Iraq, and various other Arab or Muslim states. But have they protested against the needless suffering and loss of life which is still going on, contributed to by the complacent and deceptive reassurances of New York and Washington politicians and bureaucrats? Have they heck!

As for the mass media, while they dutifully reported at length on the tenth anniversary of 9/11, they failed to report that the victims also included, as well as a good many New York residents, school staff and children, a large number of New York firemen and police, plus many other rescue workers from all parts of country who either volunteered or were drafted in to help with clearing up the Ground Zero sites, in the weeks and months after 9/11, not to mention also the cleaners employed to clean out the dust from people’s apartments and a number of office blocks affected by

the huge quantity of lethal pollutants.

The British media, like the US mass media, avoided any mention of the environmental and health hazards caused by 9/11. Almost everyone agreed in turning a blind eye.

Juan Gonzalez, an investigative journalist for the New York DAILY NEWS, had trouble getting his articles on the subject published at all. When his book, FALLOUT - THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER COLLAPSE (September 2002), was published, it failed to attract any reviews in the British mass media, including journals such as THE ECONOMIST, NEW SCIENTIST and even PRIVATE EYE. For a book on such an issue to be brushed aside like this is odd, especially as this was and still is an important issue.

Early on, it was decided by President Bush and Mayor Giuliani that the city must return to normal as soon as possible, for fear of a financial meltdown if Wall Street remained closed. So, within a week of the 9/11 event, with the fires still burning and rescue workers still struggling through the dust and debris to try to find anyone to rescue, stocks and shares were being traded as per usual at the nearby New York Stock Exchange. To cap it all, Administrator of the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Christie Whitman, declared: *“I am glad to reassure the people of New York... that their air is safe to breathe and their water is safe to drink”* (Sept. 18th, op. cit., p2).

Now, ten years later, it is known that this, like other official reassurances, was a lie. Officials lied; the Mayor of New York, Rudolph Giuliani, lied repeatedly; and so too did the President, George W Bush. The *“heroic”* fire-fighters were sent into the worst of the inferno and choking lethal dust, day after day, month after month, and for a long time they only had ineffective paper masks, at best. Even these they had had to buy themselves. Meanwhile, their *“superior officers had masks with filtration systems... captains and lieutenants [were seen] walking around with masks, with actual gas masks on...”* (p85). As one fireman later stated, the New York Fire Department implemented 24-hour shifts to speed up the rescue and recovery operation, with no protection for the lungs from the intake of pulverized cement, glass, asbestos, mercury, lead, dioxins and PCBs, and other aerosolised particles, as well as toxic fumes from burning jet fuel..

In FALLOUT, Gonzalez showed, from official reports as well as statements and research by scientists and other experts, that the collapse of the several sky-scrappers and the fires which went on for months afterwards led to huge quantities of dangerous pollutants being released into the air and even into the Hudson River.

As well as asbestos, whose dangers are well-known, there was lead. The office towers would have contained an estimated 10,000 or more PCs, not to mention hundreds of servers and mainframe computers – all containing various quantities of lead, and these were *“all pulverized into dust that day or vaporized by the fires in the subsequent months. It is likely ... that a minimum of 200,000 to 400,000 pounds of lead were released into the air, the ground, and the buildings around the site”* (p21). In addition, there were dioxins and PCBs, not to mention mercury – imagine how many fluorescent lights must have shattered in the various office blocks of the World Trade Center, and in other buildings in the area. Then there were the quantities of plastics, and tanks of petrol and diesel, which released benzene.

To attempt to list all the dangerous contaminants and heavy metals that people in the area were exposed to would take a lot of space. *“There were probably a thousand or more chemicals in that soup,”* says industrial hygienist, Monona Rossol. *“No one knows how that could affect a person.”* (p22). It was not till some months later (February 2002) that an independent study, by the University of California at Davis was published which showed that in October 2001 *“air pollution levels in lower Manhattan had been worse than during the oil fires in Kuwait after the Gulf War”* (p22). Much earlier, the airborne dust had been shown to be extremely alkaline, caustic and highly corrosive (US Geological Survey’s report, Sept. 27th 2001). Yet this information was not passed to the public by the EPA.

What of Whitman’s ‘Reassurance’?

A radio discussion of **The Health Legacy of Ground Zero** was broadcast in 2006, from Massachusetts.

When the planes hit the twin towers on 9/11 the buildings were pulverized. It's estimated two million tons of dust containing cement, asbestos, glass, lead, PCBs and other known carcinogens rained down on lower Manhattan. ...In a just-released study of 10 thousand patients in the Mt. Sinai program, 70 percent show signs of new and lingering health problems related to their time at the world trade center site.... One of the primary causes of the respiratory problems was exposure to pulverized cement and glass. The cement in particular was very alkaline, very high ph, extremely irritating, and we think that that then caused chronic inflammations in our patients.

Yet the US government was unwilling to provide any compensation to those made ill by the toxic dust and other pollutants. Only recently, after the Zadruga Act was passed, named after a fireman who died, some limited compensation has— at last - been budgeted for medical treatment, with a cap on the funds available, but it still excludes those with cancer. It is a case of broken legs – yes, but cancer - no. Even after a very recent and large-scale, peer-reviewed, scientific study published in THE LANCET, the government official responsible still claims that it is impossible to “*prove*” that cancers have caused by or connected with the toxic dust and fumes from 9/11.

In addition to false assurances about the air and water being “*safe*”, and then sending rescuers and volunteers into this toxic and even lethal area, the government then dragged its heels about funding treatment for those who then became ill as a consequence. As Dr Landrigan of the Mt Sinai Hospital said cautiously in 2006, five years after the event, “*It was clear that diagnostic and screening programs weren't enough*”.

The principle adopted by the government was the same as after Hiroshima and Nagasaki: there too the US government funded “*diagnosis and evaluation*”, studying the Japanese survivors of the atom bomb attacks, but for a long time did not provide funds for treatment (see HIROSHIMA by John Hersey, August 1946, Penguin and NEW YORKER)). The same pattern emerges from the Iraq War, where civilian casualties were deliberately covered up. The Iraq Body Count website, carried a recent item about civilian casualties, from the American Civil Liberties Union which had put in a Freedom of Information request in 2006.

ACLU spokesperson:

Several years into the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and as evidenced by the incident in Haditha, Iraq, when 24 civilians were killed, the ACLU noticed a troubling pattern. The government was going out of its way to hide the human cost of the wars. It refused to release statistics about the number of civilian casualties, it would embed journalists with military units and require that those journalists submit reports for prepublication review, it would pay Iraqi journalists to write positive accounts of the war, and in Afghanistan it destroyed the footage of an incident where US soldiers shot indiscriminately at the civilian population. The ACLU filed a Freedom of Information Act request to seek to pull back the veil of secrecy on the issue of civilian casualties and to try to bring some transparency and accountability to this realm.

[See IRAQ BODY COUNT website, 2011]

As for New York, the USA system of health insurance, by commercial, profit-driven organisations, meant that nearly half of those affected by 9/11 had no insurance at all. As for the rest, they soon found their ‘*cover*’ did not cover them for long-term, chronic and complex illnesses. In addition, there would be many local residents, including women, children, immigrants and the unemployed, who would have had no insurance, as well as no protection from the deadly, choking dust. Capitalism as a system has its own sweet way of making every sort of disaster much much worse, at least for the working class. Poverty is a contributing factor in the illnesses and deaths in the last 10 years.

Profiting from the 9/11 goldmine

But let's not be too despondent. New York is the home of Western capitalism, and of course capitalism is the best system possible, as we are so often told by capitalist politicians. As on the trading floors of Wall Street and other Stock Exchanges, in every deal there are winners as well as losers. The same principle applies in wars and acts of terrorism. An article in a New York paper, VILLAGE VOICE (www.villagevoice.com), 9|11: **The Winners**, was subtitled **For some people, the terrorist attacks have been a gold mine.**

9/11 has created an economy all its own... Glenn Corbett, a professor of fire science at John Jay College, active in a range of 9/11 issues, puts it this way: "Lots of people have got their hand in the till. A lot of people and a lot of companies have made a lot of money off of 9/11." (31 August 2011)

Those involved included Wall Street corporations and banks, politicians and government officials, 'non-profits' and swarms of lawyers, and even those who have created a '*Ground Zero memorial*' industry, selling off bits of '*memorabilia*', or claiming to be raising funds to help the victims: almost any organisation or get-rich-quick shyster has been in on the 9/11 act. This article cited in detail the huge amounts of money pocketed by numerous individuals and an incredibly wide variety of organisations, ranging from government departments to phony fundraisers. Again, a recognisable pattern can be seen. The US has involved itself in a number of wars, including its own Civil War. Wars have always, it seems, led to war-profiteering (think Halliburton and so on). Indeed, George W Bush owed his privilege and inherited wealth to the dealings with Germany, throughout the 1920-1930s and even during World War Two, of his banking forbears, Prescott Bush and George Walker. War is seen as a good way to get rich in many countries, not just the USA (GUARDIAN 25th Sept.2004).

Whether it is a matter of war or terrorism, or merely atmospheric pollution and industrial injury: capitalists reckon to make profits but the workers are simply the unseen victims of the capitalism Juggernaut. That is the true meaning of the 9/11 '**fallout**'. That is the pattern, seen by many generations of workers – a sick-making system: cynical politicians and their crocodile tears, weep all the way to the bank, as we know Bush, Blair and Mayor Giuliani did, even as they enriched themselves from the 9/11 horrors. How many more generations of workers must put up with this evil and callous system? When can we look to see the working class waking up to their own interests and organise consciously and politically for Socialism.

The Jarrow March: Marching for What?

In October 1936, a group 200 unemployed men from the north-eastern town of Jarrow marched 330 miles to London. Now campaigners are to recreate the Jarrow March of 75 years ago to walk to London to demand a programme of job creation. Great grandchildren of the original Jarrow marchers will take part, as well as unemployed young people, students and young trade unionists. Surely it would be better to learn the mistakes of the failed Jarrow march of 1936 where unemployment in the ship yards only ended with the outbreak of the Second World War rather than repeating them again. And these mistakes were to believe that employers have a duty of providing employment; that governments serve the interest of all society and that workers have stake in capitalism. They don't. A better use of these workers' time would be by becoming Socialists and struggling with other workers to replace capitalism with its unemployment for Socialism based on common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society. Only the establishment of Socialism will end unemployment.

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You Just Couldn't Make It Up

We reprint below the following news report from the DAILY TELEGRAPH (6th August 2011).

Among the men and women burdened with the ultimate responsibility of launching America's nuclear missiles it was known as the "Jesus loves nukes" lesson. For 20 years the course on "Christian Just war Theory" was taught by chaplains at Vandenberg Air force Base in California to those who would turn the key should the Third World war break out. The training, which used passages from the Bible and religious imagery to demonstrate the moral justification for atomic warfare, has been suspended after the launch officers, themselves mostly Christians, complained. A PowerPoint presentation on the course consisted of 43 slides including references to Biblical figures such as Abraham and John the Baptist. Instructors quoted St Augustine's doctrine of the just cause for war, telling them it was right "to avenge or to avert evil, to protect the innocent and restore moral and social order". The course was stopped after 31 nuclear missile launch officers complained to the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, a group that campaigns for the separation of church and state. Its founder, Mikey Weinstein, said the officers, who were Protestants and Roman Catholics, were being told that "under fundamentalist Christian doctrine, war is a

good thing". He said they found that "disgusting.

You just couldn't make it up. What was not questioned, not by the 31 nuclear launch officers, not by the military hierarchy who ran the course, and not by the chaplains who taught that it was theologically permissible to kill millions of people in a nuclear holocaust, was the barbaric social system that needed nuclear weapons in the first place. What is "*disgusting*" is the continued belief in nationalism and religion. In the mental landscape of these politically brainwashed idiots – a cast of whom seem to have been drawn from the film DR STRANGELOVE: OR HOW I LEARNT TO LOVE THE BOMB, - nationalism merely trumps religion to justify "*turning the key*" to unleash Armageddon on the world. In their deranged minds it was OK for the missiles to be draped in the Stars and Stripes but not ok to have etched on the side of the missile casing; "*with love from Jesus Christ*".

This news report is an example of the perverse values of capitalism, the politics of the mad house. To question capitalism with its wars and weapons of mass destruction was totally absent from the military mind-set. Until workers begin to question capitalism and start to take conscious political action as Socialists to replace the profit system with World Socialism this madness will continue.

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Object and Declaration of Principles

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (ie land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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